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*He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."  
-2 Corinthians 12:9*

Dear Friends,

A few weeks before I left Guatemala for the U.S., six members of our villages' *puesto de salud* (health post) committee, came to see me. "*Hermana*," Chico Perez, the president of the committee said, "I know this is a bother but the clinic needs a cement floor for the outdoor waiting area and we don't have enough money. Can you help us?"

A few times I had accompanied sick friends waiting their turns in chairs on the dirt floor at the clinic. *What about hygiene?* I wondered. Dirt floors harbor parasites causing diarrhea and anemia; *and this is a health clinic?* Chico also said that the immunization clinic took place there. I pictured long lines of mothers with babies in their arms and small children eyes tightly closed waiting for the 'ouch,'- barefoot.



These health posts, spread throughout the countryside in isolated areas, like Santiago Ixcán, are managed by the Guatemalan Department of Health. Unfortunately, Guatemala has been in a health crisis for years due to corruption and mismanagement of funds. Often the clinic shelves stand bare with little or no medicine, doctors and nurses sometimes go for months without receiving a paycheck, nor are the facilities maintained. So, here we are.

"Let me consult with the Board of Directors," I said. "Come back in a few days."

Chico and committee returned. "If you bring me half the money needed for this project- Ixcán Ministries will pay for the other half." They looked at each other, nodded, and said, "We will get the money! If we have to, we will go house to house begging for funds!" And that is what they did.

"Here's the money, *Hermana*." The treasurer of the committee counted out the bills. I looked up smiling, "O.K. you guys," as I handed Chico a check, "Go and pour some cement."

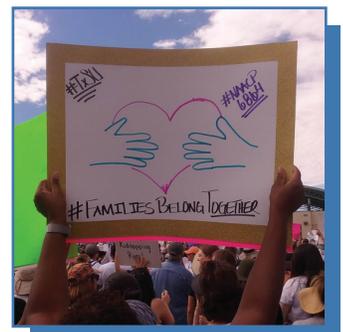
The cement poured on this dirt floor was needed and was greatly appreciated. And, I am thinking it wasn't hard to do; I wrote a check. In addition, the results of our intervention were quick and visible. Nice.

But, other things in life and ministry often aren't so easily resolved - visible results are painstakingly slow, if at all. Some of the things I have done this summer and things that wait my upcoming return to Guatemala fall into this second category- the hard, the slow.

Things like:

Promoting peace and justice...

This summer I returned to the place of my first mission (Our Lady's Youth Center/ The Lord's Ranch -1984-1988) in El Paso, Texas on the border with Cd. Juarez, Mexico. The timing of my visit was during the height of the 'separation of families' conflict that was a part of U.S. immigration law.



On June 30th, I and 1500 others, peacefully rallied in downtown El Paso to the Paso del Norte International bridge to reject family separation and detention and demand fair and humane immigration laws.

This hits close to home...

When two children from our village, Anderson Giovanni age 7 and Vivian Analy age 9, crossed the border in Arizona with their mothers, uniformed officials tore their grasping arms around waists and legs and separated them from their mothers. These women risked everything to come to *El Norte*. Perhaps it was the low cardamom prices, the storm that wiped out the corn crops, that pushed them and their children from all they knew in hopes for a better life; one with full bellies, shoes on feet, a book in hand.

The mothers were deported back to Guatemala and shell-shocked returned to Santiago Ixcán. Anderson and Vivian are somewhere, the family is told, in New York State!

How to get them home?

Or writing a book...

For a week in August, I joined eleven gifted writers from around the country and Canada at Collegeville Institute in Collegeville, MN. We were part of a summer week-long all-expense paid writing workshop guided by mentor and author *par excellence*, Michael McGregor (author of *Pure Act: The Uncommon Life of Robert Lax*).

I faced the mountain of placing words on the blank page that at times seemed insurmountable, and with help, took some upward steps. The journey of a thousand miles beginning with the single step of writing this book continues.



I hope to return to Guatemala in early September. I already know there are things waiting...

Like walking with Domingo, a recovered alcoholic. (See his story in June 2018 newsletter.) With him, I want to try and reach out to the many others in our village in the throes of addiction. I wonder how to best do this with no nearby AA meetings, addiction counselors and recovery programs. But, Domingo is still sober and we have God.

Or taking the hand of 65-year old Ana, the woman whose husband was electrocuted in a freak accident two months ago.

Things like that, things that are not easy. You have yours.

So, I begin with the one first step – I pray – then listen – and receive... Grace. God's grace that is sufficient for the next written word, the next look of compassion, the next act of solidarity.

We are deeply grateful for God's grace through you in allowing us to help the people of the Ixcán.

May you know God's sufficiency and grace in your needs and in the 'hards' of your lives. Know that you are in our prayers.

Sincerely,

Kathy Snider

#### **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

Ixcán Ministries is a Christian lay mission serving as a ministry of presence with the Maya people in the Ixcán jungle of Guatemala. We act as a bridge between cultures for the exchange of gifts to transform lives and society.

Ixcán Ministries is a 501(c) 3 organization. Your contributions are tax deductible.

Contact us or send a donation to:

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